

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING
January 4, 2005

The Edgefield County Council held its regular meeting at 6:00 P. M. Tuesday, January 4, 2005, in the Council Chambers 225 Jeter St., Edgefield.

Members present

C. Monroe Kneece, Chairman
Willie C. Bright, Vice Chairman
Norman Dorn, Councilman
Joel D. Hudson, Councilman
B. Everette Kitchens, Councilman

Others present

Wayne Adams, County Administrator
John F. Byrd, Jr., County Attorney
Barbara R. Stark, Clerk to Council

Mr. Kneece called the meeting to order and the invocation was given by Councilman Hudson. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Oath of Office

At this time the County Attorney administered the Oath of Office to the council. All five of the council members were elected to a new two year term: January 1, 2005 – December 31, 2006.

Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

County Attorney Byrd conducted the election of Council Chairman and Vice Chairman. Unanimous votes for Monroe Kneece as Chairman and Wille Bright for Vice Chairman were received.

Minutes

Councilman Bright made the motion to approve the December 7, 2004, Edgefield County Council Minutes as written. Motion was seconded by Councilman Kitchens and passed unanimously.

Reports

Councilman Kitchens asked the Chairman “This month will we wipe out the deficit of the EMS special revenue?” Mr. Adams stated to the Chairman “We have addressed that several times in the past, that about two-thirds of the revenue that funds the EMS department comes from property tax payments and the bulk of those are received in the months of December and January. So we look to be probably about still \$30,000 in the red when December closes out, and we look to be in the black when January closes out.”

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Public Hearing

A Public Hearing was held at this time to receive comments from the public, written and/or oral, on Ordinance No. 04-05-551, "An Ordinance Authorizing the Issuance and Sale of General Obligation Bonds, Series 2004B, or Such Other Appropriate Series Designation, of Edgefield County, SC, in the Principal Amount of Not Exceeding \$500,000; Fixing the Form and Details of the Bonds; Authorizing the County Administrator or His Lawfully Authorized Designee to Determine Certain Matters Relating to the Bonds; Providing for the Payment of the Bonds and the Disposition of the Proceeds Thereof; and Other Matters Relating Thereto."

There were no comments from the public, written or oral.

Ordinances

Motion was made by Councilman Kitchens, seconded by Councilman Hudson, to approve third and final reading of Ordinance No. 04-05-551, "An Ordinance Authorizing the Issuance and Sale of General Obligation Bonds, Series 2004B, or Such Other Appropriate Series Designation, of Edgefield County, SC, in the Principal Amount of Not Exceeding \$500,000; Fixing the Form and Details of the Bonds; Authorizing the County Administrator or His Lawfully Authorizing Designee to Determine Certain Matters Relating to the Bonds; Providing for the Payment of the Bonds and the Disposition of the Proceeds Thereof; and Other Matters Relating Thereto." Motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Councilman Hudson, seconded by Councilman Kitchens, to approve the second reading of Ordinance No. 04-05-554, "An Ordinance Authorizing the Execution and Delivery of Not Exceeding \$1,500,000 in Principal Amount of a Hospital Revenue Bond (The Edgefield County Hospital Project) of Edgefield County, South Carolina; Providing for the Form and Details of the Bond; Providing for the Disposition of the Proceeds Thereof; and Other Matters Related Thereto." Motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Councilman Dorn, seconded by Councilman Hudson, to approve first reading of Ordinance No. 04-05-555, "An Ordinance Providing for the Conveyance of a Building and Land Parcel of Edgefield County Churches Helping Others, a Charitable, Non-Profit Organization Serving the Needy Citizens of Edgefield County." Motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Two bids to replace windows at the Governmental and Agricultural Buildings were presented to Council for consideration.

Mark Shealy Construction	(Adm. Bldg. - \$5,630)	(Ag. Bldg. - \$13,120)
Dana Leopard	(Adm.Bldg. - \$4,224)	(Ag. Bldg. - \$10,400)

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Motion was made by Councilman Hudson, seconded by Councilman Bright, to use Dana Leopard to replace windows at the Governmental Building and the Agricultural Building. Motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Ernest Archer presented an overview of the employee compensation and classification study which his firm was commissioned to do by the County Council. Dr. Archer discussed his findings and how a "Pay for Performance" system could be implemented. There would not be steps and grades. The range system and the "Pay for Performance" would essentially ask the county council to set aside each year an amount of money that would be called incentive pay. It would be distributed among the employees based on their evaluations by their department heads using a performance appraisal form (each councilman had a form in agenda).

The grievance procedure for county employees was the next item of New Business. The procedure was brought before Council for consideration to be placed in the present personnel handbook. Councilmen Hudson and Bright asked for clarification of Number 2 under Section 1 and 2.7 under Section 2. (A copy of the grievance procedure is attached to the original minutes). Mr. Adams explained each.

Number 2: "Basically that is put in to not keep the employee hanging. If you did not have a day limitation on how long the supervisor could take to respond, then they could drag this on forever. The idea is to give the supervisor a limited amount of time – if they don't respond within that time, which is two work days, then the employee can take it to the next level."

2.7. "Either side can change what they decide to present up until that time. This is meant so that at least 24 hours in advance the grievance committee will know what is going to be presented and they will have a chance to review that ahead of time. Remember, we talked about the first stages of this being oral to begin with. So when you get to a more formal procedure, like the grievance committee, then they may require something in writing that was not provided at the oral stage but might be useful to the committee to look at ahead of time. And there is no time limitation on how long a grievance committee meets. It can take however long it needs to adjudicate the matter. The point is that if there is new information there is ample time to digest it, and to ask questions of those involved in the chain of events to check the validity of what is being reported."

Mr. Adams explained further. "Consideration of one example. Assume you have a progressive discipline policy. The original complaint before the grievance committee was not about instances past. However, those instances certainly could be used in connection with making a decision on termination. And those might be brought in to the grievance committee to justify the action taken. That would not be new information because the employee is required to sign any sort of counseling document. They will know that any

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previous discipline actions exist because it is in their file. So it would not be new evidence to the aggrieved party. It should also be noted that the model grievance procedure before you is the very grievance policy we had before we took it out based on legal advice.” Motion was made by Councilman Hudson, seconded by Councilman Kitchens, to incorporate the grievance procedure into the personnel handbook. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Councilman Hudson, seconded by Councilman Kitchens, to approve the FY 2005-06 budget calendar. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Business

A Memorandum of Understanding between the Merriwether Fire Department and the Edgefield County Council/Administrator was considered at the December 7th meeting. Councilman Bright asked for more information.

Mr. Adams stated that a memorandum was in the report section of the agenda of information compiled by fire districts based on the distribution of fire calls over a period of six months. The question was “Is the Merriwether Fire Department the best place to have station two in any case?” Mr. Adams said that “Looking at the distribution of the calls it appears that it might be better located on Highway 25 or nearer to Highway 25. This would make it more central to a larger number of calls and also provide for speedier alternative response to Johnston. Right now Johnston is served by the station on Star Road but if that ambulance is on a call then it is the one in Merriwether that has to respond. There is about a 12 minute difference in responding time. There is some discussion of a facility that is available. We are talking with the owner right now but we do not have anything in writing that they would convey that building to us but it would be closer to Highway 25. That is mentioned in the report.”

A smaller survey of calls could be taken. Councilman Bright suggested taking the second week of maybe the last three months to find the exact location of calls.

Councilman Kitchens brought to the floor that at one time the possibility of getting the Senior Citizens Council to transport non-emergency patients was discussed and he wanted to know if that was ever pursued. Jewel Plaxco, the EMS Director, responded to that with the required medical training necessary for a medical transport. You transport a patient to a doctor’s office while in an ambulance you have to have a basic EMT on board. Mr. Kitchens said he felt one of the main problems is tying up the ambulance. Could an EMS person be provided without an ambulance and have that ambulance available? Mr. Adams said “We could do a transport unit, and we could also privatize the non-emergency transport aspect of the service. We have done a study on that as far as what we were receiving in revenue for a year. That would have to be weighed against response time though – and how do you value each increment of response time – you

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really cannot place a value on that. But you could franchise non-emergency transports so that our EMS with its limited two stations, is never tied up doing a transport. That would certainly re-duce response time. But as far as the Senior Citizens, they have established routes they have to service everyday with their transportation system. The likelihood that EMS transports for any given day are going to be in their path of travel is remote. They do take some to the doctor but not a transport where a patient would need constant medical attention. The issue of changing the rate at which we pay utilities to Merriwether Fire Dept. is still at hand. Obviously our current arrangement will not change anytime soon, so what I am asking council's consideration of is paying that higher rate (from half of utilities to 85%) as long as the EMT's are there. Motion was made by Chairman Kneece to pay the higher rate as long as the EMS base is there. Motion seconded by Councilman Hudson. Motion carried unanimously. Mr. Hudson wanted to know though what about the people up Martintown Road all the way up to 23 and back down 23 – what response will they have. That coverage is already from Star Rd – not from Merriwether. From Merriwether up to Key Road.

The Chairman brought up an item not on the agenda. Correspondence was received from Attorney Danny Crowe concerning Plane Fun, asking if Council would like to go ahead with a declaratory judgment. We had agreed to this about a month ago. Motion was made by Councilman Kitchens to go ahead and prepare the Complaint against Plane Fun for the declaratory judgment action requesting that the Court set aside the current Plane Fun lease. Motion was seconded by Councilman Bright. Motion carried with four yeas and one nay by Councilman Hudson.

Each councilman was presented an envelope containing the settlement that was executed today in the case of Peeler v. Edgefield County et.al., which essentially involves no monetary settlement whatsoever, no payment for attorneys fees by the county, and no other material concession by the county.

Guests

Rick Greene with Upper Savannah offered assistance to Council with Fire Department population concentrations.

No executive session.

Claims approved as follows:

A.	PAYROLL:	11/22/04 thru 12/5/04	
	Regular.....		\$179,525.25
	PAYROLL:	12/06/04 thru 12/16/04	

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Regular..... \$171,734.40

PAYROLL: 12/20/04 thru 1/02/05

Regular..... \$187,082.20

B. General Operating..... \$757,756.94

There being no further business, Councilman Dorn made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Hudson. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 1, 2005.

C. Monroe Kneece, Chairman

Willie C. Bright, Vice Chairman

Norman Dorn, Councilman

Joel D. Hudson, Councilman

B. Everette Kitchens, Councilman

ATTEST

Barbara R. Stark, Clerk to Council